



# NEWS

**Federal Communications Commission**  
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## **FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION TAKES A MAJOR INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE U.S. TELEPHONE NUMBER USAGE**

### ***New Rules Confront Issue of Rapid Telephone Number Consumption by Allocating Telephone Numbers More Efficiently, Predictably and Orderly***

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) today adopted new policies and rules to reduce the need for new area codes, avoiding the inconvenience, costs and confusion associated with changes in area codes for consumers and businesses. State regulatory commissions are frequently implementing new area codes, and today's FCC action will promote the more efficient use of these numbering resources, and help states in better managing new area codes.

Additionally, the new rules will make the existing telephone numbering system more compatible with the increasingly competitive telecommunications environment. The rapid use of telephone numbering resources is being driven by several factors, including the increase in the number of new competitors, the introduction of new technologies, such as wireless telephones, the spread of new services, such as Internet, data, and facsimile services, and the way our numbering resources are currently managed.

Last year, the FCC examined and sought comment on several administrative and technical measures for optimizing the use of numbering resources. In the *Report and Order* adopted today, the FCC authorizes a number of measures, which promote more efficient use of numbering resources. Specifically, today's action will ensure that:

- ❑ consumers are protected from the expense and inconvenience that result from the implementation of frequent new area codes by state regulatory commissions;
- ❑ the limited telephone numbering resources in the North American Numbering Plan are used more efficiently; and,
- ❑ all carriers have the numbering resources they need to compete in the rapidly growing telecommunications marketplace.

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In the rules adopted today, the FCC creates national standards to address numbering resource optimization, including:

- ❑ A technical solution for allocating numbers in blocks of 1,000, rather than 10,000 (“thousands-block number pooling”), wherever possible, and establishes a plan for national rollout of mandatory thousands-block number pooling by carriers with local number portability (LNP) capability. Wireless carriers who become LNP-capable in November 2002 will be required to begin participating in pooling at that time or soon thereafter.
- ❑ Administrative measures that will allow the FCC to monitor more closely the way numbering resources are used within the U.S. These measures will link a carrier’s ability to obtain numbering resources more closely to its actual need for telephone numbers to serve its customers. Specifically, the FCC adopts a uniform set of numbering status definitions, objective criteria, and enhanced data reporting to increase carrier accountability and incentives to use numbers efficiently.
- ❑ Numbering resource reclamation requirements to ensure the return of unused numbers to the inventory for assignment to other carriers. Additionally, the new rules will mandate that carriers, to the extent possible, assign numbering resources within thousands blocks sequentially to facilitate reclamation and the establishment of thousands-block number pools.

With today’s action, the FCC also sought comment on the following matters relating to its findings in the *Report and Order*:

- (1) which thousands-block number pooling costs will be eligible for recovery as carrier-specific incremental costs;
- (2) whether charging for numbering resources is a viable solution to control the use of numbering resources;
- (3) what utilization threshold carriers must meet before they may obtain growth-numbering resources; and,
- (4) whether covered wireless providers required to implement pooling when they become LNP-capable in November 2002 should be given an additional transition period to begin participating in thousands-block number pooling.

Docket No.: CC 99-200

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Action by the Commission March 17, 2000, by Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 00-104). Chairman Kennard and Commissioners Ness, Furchtgott-Roth, Powell, and Tristani.

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